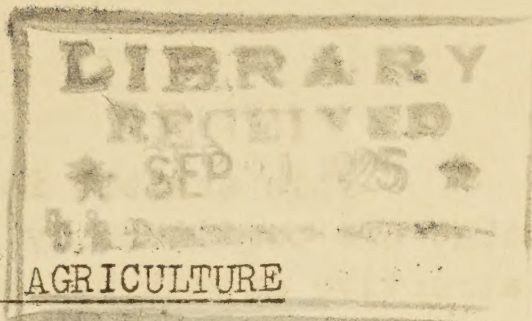


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Service

Office of Exhibits

A Summary of the Exhibit

POCKET GOPHER

A relief-model booth exhibit showing how the pocket gopher destroys crops and other vegetation; the value of destroyed crops; and methods of eradication,

Specifications

Floor space - - - - - 15' 3" front, 6' 3"
Wall space - - - - - None. (deep.
Shipping weight - - - - - 1100 lbs.
Electrical requirements - None.

POCKET GOPHER

How It Looks

This exhibit is a reproduction of one of the wars that are continuously being waged between man and destructive animal pests. In this instance it is the pocket gopher secretly working away in the dark to destroy the farmer's alfalfa field.

The exhibit is in the form of a booth 14'6" wide, 6' deep and 7'4" high and represents a typical western scene showing a long narrow valley with steep rocky hills on either side.

The front represents a cross section of the valley showing the soil down to a depth of three feet. The modeled surface of the soil extends back for two feet where it merges into the painted background.

The right half of the valley shows a good stand of alfalfa with strong taproots running well down into the subsoil. The left half of the valley was once a profitable alfalfa field also, but now one can see only a few scattered plants. The reason for the loss of the stand can be seen in the cross-section which shows the tunnels of the rodent and two gophers in the main runway. The alfalfa taproots and even tree roots have been cut off by the gophers which have carried on their destructive work in the dark and out of sight of the farmer.

A look at the main tunnel will show how the farmer may fight back by means of poisoned bait and traps. The left front section gives directions regarding the proper method of preparing poisoned bait and the cost per acre of exterminating the rodents. The right section gives interesting facts regarding the kind of crops destroyed by this pest.

What It Tells

Pocket gophers are among the worst of our native rodent pests. The animals occur in every State west of the Mississippi River and are especially injurious to alfalfa and grazing lands, hay meadows, orchards and root crops. They often ruin the entire stand of alfalfa

by cutting off the tap roots. They greatly reduce the quantity of hay that can be harvested, both by injuring the stand and by piling up mounds of dirt over considerable portions of the crop. These mounds interfere with cutting the hay and frequently damage the harvesting machinery.

The burrows of pocket gophers in the banks of irrigation ditches have resulted in great damage by causing breaks which were followed by serious loss of water, often at critical periods, by the inundation and destruction of crops and by large expenditures for repair of the ditch banks. As these are burrowing animals, the damage to plants occurs chiefly underground and is often irreparable before the cause is noted.

Knowledge of the actual damage being done by this animal and demonstration that it can be effectively controlled at a reasonable cost has led to extensive field operations against them. Such operations have proved that these pests can be successfully eradicated through the use of various vegetable, grain, alfalfa, or clover baits treated with strychnine and properly placed in the runways or by the use of traps of special design. Extended operations against these animals are now in progress through cooperation between the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, the Extension Service of the State agricultural colleges, State departments of agriculture and farmers' and stockmen's associations. Gratifying results are being obtained and the work is growing steadily as the direct benefits derived from such effort become evident through demonstrations and the actual clearing of farm and range lands, orchards and the banks of irrigation ditches.

Where to Get Information

Apply to the Biological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., or to its local Leaders of Rodent Control, or representatives of the Agricultural Extension Service. Secure Circular Bi 175 - Directions for Poisoning Pocket Gophers.

